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# Using Coordinates to Find Locations Anywhere

KS2 MATHS

KS3 GEOGRAPHY

Ages 9-14



3 min read

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## What Are Coordinates?

**Coordinates** are pairs of numbers that describe exactly where something is. Instead of saying "it's somewhere near the tree," coordinates give you precise instructions to find any location. They work like a secret code for places.

Every point on Earth, every location on a map, and every spot in a computer game can be described using coordinates. This makes finding things easy, whether you're using **GPS** (the technology in your phone), reading a treasure map, or playing a video game.

Think of it like a cinema seat. Instead of saying "somewhere in the middle," you use a row letter and a seat number. "Row D, Seat 5" tells you exactly where to sit.

Coordinates work the same way for locations.

## How Do Coordinates Work?

Coordinates use two numbers called **axes**. The first number tells you how far across (left or right) to go. The second number tells you how far up (or down) to go. This is called a **grid system**.

On a map, these axes are usually called **latitude** and **longitude**. **Latitude** runs east-west and shows how far north or south you are from the **equator**. **Longitude** runs north-south and measures how far east or west you are from the **Prime Meridian** (an imaginary line through Greenwich in London).

Think of it like a city with numbered streets and lettered avenues. "5th Street and B Avenue" tells you exactly where the coffee shop is. Latitude and longitude work the same way for the whole planet.

## Real-World Uses

You use coordinates every day without realizing it. **GPS devices** in cars and phones use coordinates to show your location and give directions. Pilots use coordinates to navigate aeroplanes safely. Scientists use them to track wildlife migrations and study

earthquakes. Even video games use coordinate systems so the character knows where they are in the virtual world.

**Maps** also use grid systems. A street map might have numbers down the side and letters across the top. To find a street, you look for where the letter and number meet—just like coordinates.

## **Why Coordinates Matter**

Coordinates are a universal language that works everywhere on Earth. A location described with coordinates in London means the same thing in Tokyo or Sydney. This makes them incredibly powerful for rescue services, explorers, scientists, and anyone who needs to find something exact.